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BACK BAY: CONDITION OF THE HOUSING STOCK

Housing Age and Condition - Census Data

For purposes of comparison, the census data on housing unit conditions has some utility; the intrinsic value of the data however is to be questioned. A more reliable and definitive description of residential building condition is presented later, based on the local B.R.A. survey of building conditions throughout the city.

According to the 1960 Census data, residential units in Back Bay are generally in slightly better condition than is the average for housing units throughout the city. Approximately one of six units within the area is considered not in sound condition. This compares favorably to slightly over one out of five for the entire city. The bulk of unsound units in Back Bay are considered only deteriorated. The 15% of all units so classified is slightly below the city norm. Only 1% are adjudged as dilapidated, a percentage but one-fourth the city-wide figure.

This high quality of residential units attests to both the original construction standards and the present economic vitality of most of the area. Almost no new residential construction occurred in Back Bay between 1940 and 1960. According to Census data, 99.5% of the present units are in structures built before 1940, and as is well-known most of the area was developed during the 19th century.

Condition of Residential Structures - B.R.A. Survey

On the basis of the recent survey of condition of structures conducted by the B.R.A., the quality of housing in the Back Bay is markedly superior to the city in general. Only 14% of residential

structures need extensive minor repairs, and but 1% require major repairs.

For the 4 major survey areas within Back Bay the expected relationship between income level and housing condition is evident. The highest income area bordering the Charles River has but 5% of residential structures in need of extensive minor repairs and none requiring major repairs. The other high income area bordering the north side of Boylston Street has but a slightly higher percentage of substandard units. The low income neighborhood between Massachusetts Avenue and the Prudential Center site contains 46% substandard units, though for the preponderance of such units major repairs are not required.

BACK BAY GNRP R-47

CONDITION OF STRUCTURES: All and Residential

	All Structures		Res. Structures	
	#	%	#	%
A	370	19.2	277	19
B	1273	66.1	948	65.2
C	262	13.6	210	14.5
D	21	01.1	17	1.2
	1926	100	1452	99.9

BACK BAY: EXISTING ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Labor Force Participation:

For persons fourteen years of age and older in Back Bay, the rate of participation in the labor force is significantly higher than the rate for Boston or the region as a whole. This characteristic does not apply to the male population within Back Bay, as their rate corresponds with the city norm. The labor force participation rate for females within the community is however one and half times the city rate and almost double the regional rate. For both sexes, in Back Bay, participation in the labor force has risen significantyl since 1950.

Unemployed within the area is well below the general city rate. Again however the working male population corresponds to the ciy norm. For females the rate of unemployment is but half that recorded for females generally throughout the city.

Employment by Occupation:

Along with the very high participation rate and low unemployment rate, the residents of Back Bay present a very specialized pattern and high level of operative skills. Their proportion represented in the general category "white collar" is one third over the city norm, and higher than the regional proportion. The distribution of occupations by sex is especially significant. For females, the dominent category is "clerical" as might be expected. However the only other dominent group for females is professional-technical" and the residence of females so clasified is numerically greater than for males, even though this category dominates the distribution of male occupations. For

males the next leading category is the other top-ranking white collar category of "managers, proprietors and officials".

In comparision to city and regional norms the "blue collar" occupations were drastically under represented in Back Bay in 1950 and even more so in 1960. The percentage of occupations "not reported" was in Back Bay two and half times the city rate. It can be presumed that a reduction of this element and consequent redistribution of occupations would make by direct percentage comparisbn, the specilized distribution of Back Bay occupations look more unique.

Commutation to Work:

The proportion of employed residents of Back Bay who work within the city of Boston, (82%) is essentially the same as the percentage for the employed residents throughout the city. Half of the remainder have job locations across the Charles River in Cambridge as would be expected.

The means of transportation utilized in daily work trips differs radically from the general city pattern. The use of automobiles is but one-half the city average, as is work travel by bus or streetcar. The use of subway facilities is also below the city norm. However, almost one third walk to work, a proportion almost two and half times the rather high city rate of 13%. In addition, a large percentage of the Back Bay working population either use "other means", (presumably taxis, by and large), or work at home. The general conclusion must be that this area does not generate a daily worker load on transportation facilities, including streets, proportional to its high density or high labor force participation rate.

Income and Earnings:

In view of the labor force and occupational characteristics outlined above, it is not surprising that the family income level of Back Bay is significantly higher than the average recorded for the city. The median family income in 1960 for families throughout Boston was approximately $5750. For Back Bay, the figure was $6450, or and average of $700 more per year. A significant 26% of all families earn over $10,000 per year, which is double the city wide percentage and much higherthan the 21% recorded for the region as a whole. It should benoted however that the incidence of low familyincomes approximate or evenexceed the general city average.

Dealing with only family incomes tends to obscure theincome pattern of the high propotions of unrelated individualresiding in Back Bay. The median income of families and unrelatedindividuals, falls far below the city wide figure of $4260. The sameproportional disparity existed in 1950. Though such data is not available., one can only surmise that incomes for unrelated individuals alone, excluding families, fall even shorter of the city norm.

Both the statistical and physical distribution of family earning power within Back Bay is noteworthy. The three census tracts south of Boylston Ave. to the New Haven Railroad have fairly low family incomes and fall within the third, (next lowest) quartile of the city income distribution. Family incomes from Boylston Ave north to Commonwealth and Marlborough Aves. are much above the city median,-- $7435 to $5750. The area north of Marlborough Ave. to the Charles River is even higher,($8880) within the first quartile of the family income distribution for the city, and over 3000 above the city median.

SCHOOLS

(Major assumption: decrease in rate of out-migration in the City as a whole.)

	Assumptions	Abandon	New Construction	Year	Service Area Center
Back Bay	Not expected to produce large numbers of public school pupils.	C.C.Perkins		1975	
		Prince	200 K-5 School	1966	On present site of State Dept. of Education Offices

RECREATION - BACK BAY

I. Existing Facilities

	Location	Size	Site Character	Environment	Facilities	Use
Covered	None Public WMCA on Huntington	→				
Open Intensive Active	none					
Open Intensive Passive	Copley Square	.5 acr				
	Commonwealth Ave	32 acres				
	Trinity Triangle	.2 acres				
		32.7 tot.				
Open Extensive Active	none					
Regional Accessible	Boston Common	48.40 acres				
	Back Bay Fens	114.60 acres				
	Public Garden	24.25 acres				
	Charles Esplanade					
		187.25 tot.				

RECREATION - BACK BAY

III. Unmet Quantitative Needs

	Existing	1960 Client	Standard	Deficiencies
Open Intensive Active				
Tot Lots	0	0-4 age 374	.14 acres per 100	.52 acres
Playgrounds A	0	5-9 age 219	1.1 acres per 350	1.1 acres
Playgrounds B	0		.2 acres per 100	.4 acres
Open Intensive Passive	32.7 acres	total population 18, 292	1.5 acres per 2,000	19.2 acres over standard
Open Extensive Active	0	10 - 19 age 1803	3.7 acres per 800	8 acres
Regional	187.25 acres			

LIBRARIES

Existing Facilities

	Location	Age	Adequacy of Facility
Back Bay	Copley Square Main Library		Library is planning to expand

HEALTH FACILITIES

None and no need

Back Bay: Fire Stations

Existing

Back Bay, 941 Boylston

Year Built: 1888

Building Condition: 2 engine. Fair condition.

Site Characteristics: No recreation space.

Environmental: Connected to the Police Station. Prudential Center across.

Relation to Service Area: Inefficient - too far to serve westerly. Too close to South End station.

Rothermel Proposals: (3/4 - 1 mile radius)

Abandon: 1) Boylston and Hereford

New Construction: None

Rationale: (area served by new station proposals at Isabella and Fenway outside of GNRP)

POLICE STATIONS

EXISTING FACILITIES

	Location	Description	Rothermel Proposals	Rationale
Back Bay	951 Boylston	Police Dept. hopes to abandon this station - traffic problem in the next few years while turnpike is being built - also old, obsolete building	No new station proposed within the GNRP.	The existing South End Station will serve Back Bay adequately.

Back Bay GNRP: Industrial and Wholesale Space

In terms of land area, industrial and wholesale space occupy a small portion of the Back Bay, but in terms of employment these activities are surprisingly significant. The publishing plant of the Christian Science Monitor with more than 1,000 employees accounts for the major share of the employment; drug, candy, computer research, and miscellaneous other manufacturers account for the remainder of the employment.

Most of the industrial and wholesale space is in Condition B in the Back Bay. No vacancy was recorded in any of the space.

It is located primarily along Boylston Street, the only street in Back Bay which has an entirely non-residential character. Off-street loading seems adequate; the back alleys in the Back Bay permit loading from the rear. Off-street parking, although inadequate generally in the Back Bay, is probably adequate for industrial employees who should be traveling to Back Bay jobs by MTA rather than by car.

An increase in industrial space is neither likely nor desirable in the Back Bay. An increase in wholesale space may be needed, however, to service the new office and hotel space now being constructed in Back Bay. Wholesalers of restaurant equipment, office furniture, exhibition equipment, may seek locations near the Prudential Center. As the Back Bay expands as a prime office area, areas for ancillary business services and distributors will be required, not necessarily in the GNRP but in nearby locations.

M A S T E R S H E E T

Back Bay GNRP

	Industrial	Wholesale	Commercial
Total Space	148,166	134,001	6,972,524
Vacant Space	-	-	113,179
Per cent Vacant	0	0	1.6

Condition

Per cent in Condition			
A:	0	0	47.0
B:	80.1	100.0	46.0
C:	19.8	0	6.9
D:	0	0	0.4
	100.	100.	100.
Per cent Vacant of Condition			
A:	0	0	0.7
B:	0	0	2.5
C:	0	0	5.7
D:	0	0	14.3
Per cent of all Vacant in Condition			
A:	0	0	2.3
B:	0	0	73.0
C:	0	0	24.6
D:	0	0	0
			100.

BACK BAY GNRP - FLOOR SPACE

Commercial

Condition

BRA AREA	A Total	A Vacant	B Total	B Vacant	C Total	C Vacant	L Total	L Vacant
1	1230163							
2			50243		3000			
3	1041607		936435	5422	178409	9970	4000	
4			384421		132018	13150		
5	31513	1550	10350					
6	974835	1071	1826957	77216	168573	4800		
TOTALS	3,278,118	2,621	3,208,406	82,638	482,000	27,920	4,000	

BACK BAY GNRP - FLOOR SPACE

Industrial

Condition

BRA AREA	A Total Vacant	B Total Vacant	C Total Vacant	D Total V
1				
2		28688	11225	
3		53062	18119	
4				
5				
6		32072		
TOTALS		118,822	29,344	

MANUFACTURING WITHIN BACK BAY GNRP (R-47)

Rank order by size; and type ...

1000 plus	employees	Publisher
100 - 250	employees	Candy Computer Research
25 - 100	employees	Drugs Machine Tools Rust Preventative
8 - 25	employees	Stage Draperies Incinerators Foundation Equipment Badges Diamond Tools Furniture

Total manufacturing employment: 1632

Largest: Christian Science Monitor

BACK BAY GNRP - FLOOR SPACE

Wholesale

Condition

BRA AREA	A Total Vacant	B Total Vacant	C Total Vacant	D Total V
1				
2				
3		53664		
4				
5				
6		80337		
TOTAL		134,001		

Bay [illegible]

City [illegible] and Transportation

The Bay [illegible]

[illegible]

Transportation [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

[illegible] - highly [illegible] heavy [illegible]

[illegible]

Huntington Avenue - (A) [illegible] radial [illegible] Brookline and [illegible] Tremont (AT 9) [illegible] highly congested

Boylston Street - forms [illegible] boundary [illegible] a mixed access highway serving radial traffic [illegible] the west and northwest [illegible] ways to Back Bay GNRP from Clarendon St. [illegible] (one way east) [illegible] to Boylston Street from Dartmouth St. (one way north) [illegible]

Mass Turnpike - (presently under construction [illegible] by [illegible]) [illegible] access [illegible] highway [illegible] agency [illegible] the GNRP area around the Boston and Albany R. R. [illegible]. Interchanges [illegible] Commonwealth Center (Huntington Avenue). A westbound [illegible] ramp is also proposed by the Turnpike Authority & Massachusetts [illegible]. The Turnpike is seen as a [illegible] radial [illegible] connecting Downtown Boston to the west

[illegible]

[illegible] The junction of the Dyke [illegible] in a [illegible] subway [illegible]

[illegible] The subways (in [illegible]) were operating at or near capacity which would be reached or exceeded with the opening of the Highland Branch.

[illegible] Although there has been a decline in patronage throughout the city [illegible] there has been practically no change in the use [illegible] the subway [illegible].

Bus Lines

[illegible] cross [illegible] runs along Massachusetts Avenue from Harvard Square [illegible] Arlington [illegible] Huntington Avenue.

Railroad Facilities

The main line [illegible] the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad passes [illegible] [illegible] passenger trains [illegible] the [illegible] in the south.

The [illegible] Boston [illegible] the Boston [illegible] serve a [illegible] on commuters to the west.

Yard Facilities

[illegible] for [illegible] for a few small and scattered lots the only [illegible] [illegible] between Huntington [illegible] New Haven [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] if these are as [illegible] their [illegible] [illegible] circulation map.

[illegible] Future Research Projects

[illegible]

[illegible] in the Cambridge Transportation Study have [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] been a [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] - circulation

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

BACK BAY SHOPPING CENTERS

General Description

The Back Bay GNRP, being a part of central Boston, contains many commercial activities that either belong with the central business district, or draw a considerable market from areas outside the GNRP. Those convenience goods and service establishments serving strictly the local population seem too few in number and are grouped mainly at the westerly end of the GNRP.

Massachusetts Avenue is the principal shopping street of the Back Bay, having a service area of which the so-called Back Bay GNRP is only about one-half in terms of population, and which probably includes a portion of the South End and the MIT community as well. Why local shopping was established originally on Massachusetts Avenue instead of one of the arterials is not clear. But the general configuration of Massachusetts Avenue development (which runs north-south) relates poorly to that of its service area (which is elongated in an east-west direction from Arlington St. to Park Drive). The extremities of this area are a mile from Massachusetts Avenue, and with the district's low automobile ownership and woefully inadequate parking, the problem of shopping for daily needs is a difficult one for most residents.

The present Massachusetts Avenue shopping strip has two nodes: one at Boylston Street (which serves the northerly part of Back Bay, and the MIT and BU communities), and one at Huntington Ave. (which serves the institutions grouped near it plus the southerly part of Back Bay, which is inhabited by a different social group, by

and large, from that north of Boylston). The Globe survey considers Massachusetts Avenue perhaps erroneously, as two centers. Altogether this center seems short on strictly convenience goods outlets and long on apparel, eating, and consumer service establishments. The heavy cross town traffic on Massachusetts Avenue is a hindrance to convenient access to stores and vice versa. Off street parking is tight (except for one private lot at Mass. and Westland), but not tight enough so far to force the City to build public parking facilities. There are few vacancies - Mass. Ave. being a high demand location. There has been considerable demolition recently, but commercial redevelopment may be awaiting completion of the Prudential center nearby.

The Prudential shopping center will probably serve many of the primary and secondary shopping needs of Back Bay residents, but so far as is known, will not be strong in convenience goods outlets. It should be classed as central business and city-wide in orientation.

The small cluster of convenience establishments at the corner of Stuart and Dartmouth Streets is being truncated by the Turnpike extension. One feels this center will increasingly take on the characteristics of central business.

The St. Botolph Street area is presently served by strip shopping along the southerly side of Huntington Avenue. The current speculation that this frontage is in line for private redevelopment as a consequence of Prudential construction across the street suggest that this strip will also change character to a city-wide orientation.

Suggestions for Future Shopping

The poor physical relationship of the Mass. Ave. shopping strips to its service area as well as the paucity of convenience goods outlets in the area suggests the need for development of three small compace centers to be devoted strictly to convenience goods and services for the local population. One should serve the present GNRP (or that part of it north of Boylston, and should be located along Newbury Street between Exeter and Fairfield). Another is needed to cover the area between the Fens and the Brookline line and to supplement Kenmore Square. (This is outside the GNRP) A third should serve the remaining areas - those lying between Prudential, the Fenway, and the New Haven Railroad, including a considerable institutional population. This third center should be located somewhere near the intersection of Huntington and Mass. Ave. (the present focal point of southerly Back Bay), perhaps as a redevelopment of old commercial uses in the present center. But unlike the Mass. Ave. strip, this new center should have an east-west orientation to correspond with that of its service area.

One feels that the future of most of the Mass. Ave. strips lies in the direction of activities serving a greater than local market, including the ever increasing institutional population that is tending to surround it. Since Mass. Ave. must remain an important thoroughfare, even after construction of the Inner Belt, new commercial development in the strip should be "nonstriplike in its design- i.e. should have depth as well as frontage and perhaps off street parking

and access from the rear.

Despite the fact that the CNA declined in population some 14 percent between 1950 and 1960, need for new shopping facilities can be justified because of the centrality of the area and the incipient return to the city movement on the part of suburban families.

Back Bay GNRP Shopping Demand

Total households in GNRP 1960 = 8818

families 2741, avg. family income = $23865/2741 = $8700

individuals 5077, avg. individuals income about $6000 assume gross income for

GNRP = 23,865 + 30,500 = 54,400,000

Avg. income per household = 54,400/8818 = $6160 call $6200

Avg. expend. for non durible goods = 38% gross income = $2350

Avg. expend. for services = 31% " " = 1900

Local Consumer Expenditures per Household

Type of shopping	% of gross income 66.82	38%	$ expend per hshld	local assign.	$ expend local per hshld
convenience goods	35.45	20.20	1253	80	1000
dept. store & apparel	17.43	9.90	615	40	245
furn. household, eat, drink	6.06	3.45	214	40	85
automotive	7.88	4.48	278	40	110
sub total		38.03	2360		1440
pers. serv.			140	85	120
total			2500		1560

Theoretical Local Retail Space Needs

Type of shopping	$ expend in GNRP (000)	Sales $ per sq ft	sq.ft.sales area req'd	non sales factor	total floor space req.
convenience goods	8820	100	88,000	1.4	123,000
dept. store & apparel	2160	65	33,000	1.3	43,000
furn., household, eat, drink	750	160	4,700	2.0	9,500
automotive	970	60	16,300	2.0	32,500
pers. service	1060	60	18,000	1.3	23,000
total	13760		160,000		231,000

The above estimate applies only to demand of local households within GNRP. Only one half of Mass. Ave shopping area is in GNRP. Service area pop. of entire center is probably double that for GNRP, but this population shops in many surrounding centers as well. The above estimate of demand is practically meaningless because of the centrality of the Back Bay and peculiarity of its residents.

Back Bay Shopping Centers

Number 1962	Number 1956	Name of Center	No. of Stores 1962	No. of Stores 1956
17	104	Stuart and Dartmouth	62	50
21	38	Mass. Ave. and Boylston	236	239
22	103	Huntington and W. Newton	76	75
73	61	Huntington and Mass. Avenue	99	94
		Total number of estabs.	473	466

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